



## Deer Licenses Reduced, Refunds Offered Due to Die-Offs

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department has been monitoring die-offs of white-tailed deer across portions of the state and must make adjustments to some West River deer hunting units.

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) has been confirmed in white-tailed deer, and many of the deer deaths being reported by the public are suspected to be the result of that disease.

In response to the disease, all unsold licenses will be removed from the following deer hunting units for the West River deer season: Bennett County: 11A-09 and 11B-17; Gregory County: 30A-19 and 30B-19; and Jackson County:

39B-09. In addition, 200 licenses will be removed for Meade County: 49B-09.

“As the department continues to monitor the outbreak of EHD over the next couple of weeks, we will provide additional recommendations to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission at its October meeting to address East River deer units,” said GFP Secretary Jeff Vonk. “Currently, the department plans to recommend that the commission remove all unsold licenses in Bon Homme, Hutchinson, and Yankton counties and make significant reductions to leftover licenses in Brule and Charles Mix counties for the second draw of the East River deer

season. Between now and the next commission meeting, we will continue our surveillance efforts with the possibility of additional license reductions.”

Aside from conducting ground surveillance and collecting reports from the public, GFP is also using aerial flights to help determine the severity of deer mortalities.

“Reports of dead deer are coming from across the state, and in some instances landowners are telling traditionally hosted hunters that opportunities will be limited,” Vonk said. “With that in mind, GFP is notifying deer hunters that they can voluntarily return a deer license for any sea-

son prior to the start of that respective season and receive a full refund.”

Hunters desiring a refund for a deer license should send their license, including all associated tags, to: GFP Licensing Office; 20641 SD Highway 1806; Fort Pierre, SD 57532.

EHD is common in white-tailed deer and is typically detected in late summer or early fall. The virus is spread by a biting midge and causes extensive internal hemorrhaging. Many deer exhibit no clinical signs and appear perfectly healthy, while others may have symptoms such as respiratory distress, fever, and swelling of the tongue. With highly virulent

strains of the virus, deer can be dead within 1-3 days. In an attempt to combat the high fever, affected deer are often found in low-lying areas or near rivers, ponds and other waters.

GFP continues to ask individuals who see sick deer or find dead deer to contact their local conser-

vation officer or call the Pierre office at 605-773-5913.

EHD is not infectious to humans. For more information on the EHD virus visit <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/diseases/epizootic-hemorrhagic-disease.aspx>.

## 2012 Pheasant Outlook

PIERRE, S.D. - Annual August pheasant brood counts in South Dakota indicate that the statewide pheasant population is up from last year, and that should equate to an excellent pheasant season this fall.

Complete Brood Survey Report 10-year Brood Count Trends

Results of the survey show that pheasant numbers grew in many areas of the state, due in large part to a mild winter and ideal weather during the nesting and brood-rearing season.

The pheasants-per-mile index for 2012 is 4.21, up 18 percent from the 3.57 index of 2011.

“The mild winter of 2011-12 was the boost we needed for pheasant survival and reproductive potential,” explained Jeff Vonk, secretary of the South



2012 Pheasant count up from 2011

Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. “It goes to show that, with the combination of good habitat and the right weather conditions, pheasants can be quite

prolific.

Much of the improvement in the pheasant counts came from areas of the state that had a good habitat base.

“Pheasant hunting will be good across most of the state, with the traditional pheasant range once again providing excellent hunting opportunities,” Vonk said. “More than 1.5 million pheasants were harvested last year, and our counts indicate that this year will be another exceptional year for pheasant hunting in South Dakota.”

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said the pheasant survey is good news for the state.

“Pheasant hunting is important to the economic well-being of South Dakota, and it also helps support the strong outdoor heritage of our state,” the Governor said.



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## Big Game Hunting Over Bait Prohibited

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is reminding hunters that hunting big game over bait is prohibited on all lands.

A person may not establish, utilize, or maintain a bait station when hunting from August 15 to February 1 to attract any big game

animal, including wild turkey.

A bait station is a location where grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, minerals, or any other natural food materials, commercial products containing natural food materials, or by-products of such materials are placed or maintained as an attractant to big

game animals for the purpose of hunting.

The use of scents alone does not constitute a bait station. In addition, this restriction does not apply to foods that have not been placed or gathered by an individual and result from normal environmental conditions or accepted

farming, forest management, wildlife food plantings, orchard management, or similar land management activities.

For more information, contact a local conservation officer or GFP Division of Wildlife Office.



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## Gavins Point Dam Paddlefish Seasons

Paddlefish fishing in South Dakota is as unique as the prehistoric fish that is the quarry. Paddlefish thrived in the free-flowing Missouri River. The construction of dams altered their natural habitat and caused a decline in numbers. Intense fisheries management helps ensure that the species thrives today.

A limited number of licenses are available to both residents and nonresidents to either snag or use archery equipment to take one of these large fish between Gavins Point Dam and the Big Sioux River.

**Season Dates:**  
**Paddlefish Archery** - July 14 - Aug. 12, 2012  
**Paddlefish Snagging** - Oct. 1 - Oct. 31, 2012

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